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# THE JAGIELLONIAN UNIVERSITY, CRACOW

THE scene is the *Collegium Novum*, the central building of the university, devoted chiefly to the Humanities. Electric bells are ringing everywhere, and they echo through the wide spaces of the great staircase. Then the oak doors of a score of classrooms are flung open, and the corridors, empty and silent a moment ago, are swarming with men and women students. A lecture hour is over, and another will begin very soon.

This "academic quarter-of-an-hour," famous in student tradition, gives everyone a short breathing-spell. It soon passes, and the halls are again empty, save for small groups which linger and converse in low voices. They discuss every subject under heaven, perhaps on a window-seat, perhaps in some corner of the stairs, whose granite steps have been trodden by scores of thousands since this new building was erected 70 years ago. Below is the roomy hall, and the main entrance, which opens on to the Plantations—that Ring of broad avenues, which was once the moat surrounding the inner city.

Attendance at lectures is not obligatory in the strict sense of the word. Some of the learned professors are not brilliant in the lecture room; and in that case they have few listeners. Their materials are read up from books, or from "scripts," copies of notes made by some former student, polished up for general use, and handed down from generation to generation. Many lectures, however, no one would miss at any price. To get a seat one has to come early. Whether in history or law, in literature or natural science, such lectures are in themselves an inspiration. They provoke unending debates and discussions, and give rise in the minds of the young to countless theories and philosophies of life. They have shaped many a vocation, and kindled enthusiasms for truth and beauty that burn through a lifetime. Memory brings back afterwards the faces of the men who delivered these lectures, pale in the shadow of the canopied *cathedra*, varied in expression and yet similar, marked by years of study and of public responsibility—but lit up betimes with humour or kindness. These are the real teachers, respected and loved.

The attendance is best as a rule during the autumn term. Winter provides a distraction in the form of ski-ing, which has become almost a craze in modern Poland. Heavy falls of snow are rare in Cracow, but the distance to the Carpathians is not

great, and all kinds of facilities are offered for week-end and holiday excursions. There is also another distraction at this time of year, that of the Polish Carnival—an ancient tradition. It is marked by endless dances, extending from Epiphany to Ash Wednesday. These parties often end in the grey morning with the so-called “White Mazur”—a national dance requiring energy that is not quite consonant with the languid rhythm of much modern music.

Then comes Lent, and libraries and Seminar rooms are thronged with students—seeking knowledge. This thirst for learning is no doubt genuine in most cases, but it is enhanced by the nightmare of June examinations, which begin to loom up before eyes still tired by loss of sleep. To many, however, the last alarm is not the coming of Lent, but the slowly dropping blossoms of the wild chestnuts, which line the long avenues of the Plantations. “The chestnuts are blooming!”—this observation in April sends shivers along many a spine. Under the archways of the stately trees, already shedding clouds of blossom, students appear in the early hours of morning, walking to and fro, engrossed in books or in notes. All around them the city is still asleep, and through the quiet of the May morning sounds from hour to hour the bugle-note of the Hejnal from the high tower of the parish-church of St. Mary’s. With it comes the deeper sound of ancient bells, in various parts of the city, summoning the faithful to early Mass.

This cramming for examinations does not improve the attendance at lectures during these months of the year. But spring brings other distractions in her wake. How often, as one watched the swaying chestnuts through the open windows of the lecture room, one decided that it was impossible to stay indoors for another hour, and bolted for a row on the Vistula; or started out on the brisk three-mile walk to the near-by hills. Over the Mound of Kosciuszko, and on to Sowinski with its new monument to the late Marshal, and to the natural park of Wolski. Here might be found in pairs or half dozens the same students, either relaxing entirely, or still engaged in settling the problems of science and life. Here would come on later afternoons some of the professors with groups of older pupils: to rest at the tables in outdoor restaurants, enjoy the first strawberries, and carry on the task of education and instruction even more effectively than in the classroom.

The view stirs the imagination. The Vistula winds its course below us; the chain of the Western Carpathians is on the horizon, and from the higher levels on clear days, the towering Tatras are visible in the south—still white with snow. Then comes the

homeward march, accompanied by song and story, with the vista of the ancient city lying beneath one in the valley. Tall Gothic towers and Renaissance domes tell the story of ages, while the Royal Castle on the Wawel towers above everything around it. Over on the right is the industrial district of Podgorze; and the plain around the old town is now filling up with new residential areas, revealing the energy and ambition of the restored Poland. It cannot be denied, there is something unique in this picture of city and university in Cracow. The wealth of historical tradition, the charm of ten centuries of building, and the beauty of natural surroundings leave their influence on the minds and spirits of the rising generation, scarcely less than *Alma Mater Jagellonica* herself.

## I

*Collegium Novum* is only one of a great complex of buildings, some of them going back to Gothic days. It contains the Great Hall (*Aula*), used for public functions, such as the receiving of distinguished visitors. To the outside public, however, the *Aula* is the place where students, on graduation, are given their degrees. Right down the five centuries of university history the winning of the Doctor's Degree has always been considered worth a public ceremony. The fortunate student can invite friends by special printed cards. Some of these will bring him flowers. The Rector presides, supported by the Dean of the Faculty concerned. The "promoting professor," so-called because the ceremony is known as "*promotio*," presents his candidate. All the dignitaries are in their splendid robes. The oath of allegiance to the institutions, and to the cause of truth is taken in the old Latin formula, the degree is conferred, congratulations follow, and, when all is over, the traditional luncheon at Hawelkas on the Town Square.

The Hall itself, though not large, is impressive. On its walls hang portraits of the Royal Founders and benefactors, but the gem of the collection is the painting by Matejko of the young astronomer, Kopernik, which hangs over the Rector's stall. Cracow's most distinguished alumnus is shown with his instruments on the roof of the ancient building from which he watched the stars. The moment is that of endless happiness, when the first inklings of truth are dawning on him as to the movements of the heavenly bodies. The man who "stopped the sun and set the earth in motion" looks down on the scenes described above, while his spirit hovers over the whole institution where he began his great work.

Clustered about the Collegium Novum are the newer science and mathematics buildings, in one of which the professors of chemistry were the first to liquefy air. Just behind, in the ancient street of St. Anne, is the university church, in the baroque style, and the far older Gothic building, which now houses the university library. Those who visit it, coming from the ends of the world, are charmed by its Venetian courtyard, and astounded by the treasures of its collections. In spite of the recent acquisition of a new Library, some distance away, badly needed for the growing numbers of students, this age-old building will always remain the "heart" of the university, and of the city.

We have noted below how Medicine centred its work on the other side of the city. One should add that the new School of Mines, the Faculty of Agriculture, and the School of Fine Arts have separate homes of their own; not to mention various institutions situated quite outside the city, devoted to various fields of pure and applied science. So far as its all too slender means permit, Cracow has more than kept abreast of the times.

## II

After four hundred years of national leadership, the royal dynasty of the Piasts died out in 1370. Its last member, Casimir the Great, while still a medieval product, had in him striking characteristics of the coming New Birth. His desire for national achievement in the field of administration and law, and the example of Prague in 1348, roused him to found an academic school in Cracow in 1364. In the *Patent* granted by Pope Urban V, provision was made for three faculties—law, philosophy and medicine; but, probably out of fear in respect of heresies, theology was not included. The model was, in effect, the older university of Bologna, already for two centuries renowned for its work in the field of law. The new institution was to be placed in the suburb of Cracow called after the King himself.

Active though he was, this tireless builder of his nation could not find time to realise his plans in life, nor did he leave a direct descendant, so that striking political events were needed to supply the occasion for carrying out what Casimir had planned. The young queen Japwiga, by her marriage to the Grand Prince of Lithuania, Jagiello, brought about the union of the two neighbour countries, and the drawing-in of vast new territories under the influence of Latin Christianity. One of the most cultured women of her day, the Queen felt this challenge in a very real way, and

endowed a number of scholarships for students from Lithuania at the university of Prague. This was only a half-measure, however; so with her husband she secured the permission of Pope Boniface IX to take up afresh the plans for a university in Cracow—this time with special emphasis on the faculty of theology. An early death once more threatened serious delays, but the Queen showed her resolution by leaving all her jewels as an endowment to the new institution. Jagiello added money from public funds; and with the help of certain private gifts, the reorganisation was effected and work begun in earnest in 1400. It is notable that one of the permanent sources of income for many decades was the profit from the neighbouring salt mines of Wieliczka. This time the University was placed inside the city walls on St. Anne's street, and there it has remained to the present day.

The new *Studium Generale* was no longer planned on the model of Bologna, but rather on the system of collegiate life which had already become famous in Paris. The teachers and students in theology were grouped in the *Collegium Maius*, those of law and philosophy in the *Collegium Minus*. Because of their work in hospitals and among the sick of the city, teachers and students in medicine were not compelled to live so strictly inside the college walls. Professors and students united in electing the Rector, whose work was done with four Deans of Faculties. On the analogy of other universities the institution was a sort of miniature *Respublica*, in that all its members had theoretical immunity from arrest, while even law-breakers were allowed the right of asylum within its walls. Traces of these older privileges still exist even today.

As the records show, some 12,000 students passed through the University of Cracow during the first century of its existence. It is notable that among them almost no trace of class distinction can be found. Sons of peasants and townsmen enjoyed the same privileges in the classroom as those of the country gentry, or even the magnates. Of course, there were differences of material well-being, and the "colleges" could only be maintained if their members paid good fees. The poorer students were accommodated in another type of residence, called in Latin *Bursa*. These had some private endowment, but their type of life was simpler; they had their own libraries, and many of their students had grants in aid of their studies. This type of resident college for poorer students, flourished in Cracow very early; there were already three of which we have some record—one of them named after the eminent

historian Dlugosz. A special type of *Bursa*, in which were found more well-to-do students, was set aside for foreigners—Czechs, Germans, Hungarians, etc.

The routine of study included attendance at lectures, and at the famous “disputations” held as a rule on Saturdays and Sundays for five hours at a stretch. Four years of study prepared the student, provided he was “neither a gambler nor a coward,” for the Bachelor’s degree. As elsewhere, the test was that of a *disputatio*, where the Dean officiated. Social custom demanded a visit to the baths by all concerned, and a general banquet—paid for by the new bachelors. Two more years were required for the Master’s degree, after which he could claim full “maturity” in university circles. In time, the Master could obtain the highest degree, that of Doctor; but this cost a great deal of money. The way was then open to a university chair or other high distinctions.

The 15th century, as all know, saw the rise of the New Learning in Europe, which gradually reached out its influence from the Mediterranean northwards. Cracow University soon felt the impulse of the new trends. Poles of distinction, not only philosophers in the narrow sense, but also scientists and astronomers, visited Leipzig and Padua and Paris, to say nothing of Prague and Budapest, where they both learned and lectured. Martin Bylica of Olkusz, one of the first astronomers in the country, left all his instruments at his death to the University. Among many notable names, perhaps the most outstanding was that of Wojciech Brudzewski, whose fame as a teacher of higher mathematics brought students to this most eastern of European universities at that time, from every neighbouring country. It was from him and his work that the young Nicholas Kopernik (Copernicus), and the famous German humanist, Konrad Celtes, got much of their learning.

### III

The times were full of change and ferment. While Kopernik was in Cracow, Columbus was preparing his journey to discover the new world, and the Renaissance in northern Italy had already reached its zenith. Long before this, Cracow professors had established contacts throughout Europe; in particular the theologians had represented the nation at Church Councils—especially at Constance and Basel. In the same way distinguished graduates were playing their part in public life, notably in diplomacy. We are not surprised then that, when the 16th century opens, Cracow is known as a centre of culture, equal to any in Central Europe.



It was now that the age of change began to reveal itself in more open and violent form. What had been cultural forces became political and religious. The new ideas, connected with the Reformation, dealt a mortal blow at the whole structure of medieval life and thought. The question arose in every higher institution of learning: what is to be the attitude of teacher and student to the new trends and the new forces? As we have seen, Cracow had throughout been friendly to humanism, and had been visited by men of distinction, even from Italy, some of whom spent years of their time there. Later on Erasmus was to correspond with Cracow University men, and the movement for religious reform seemed to be the natural corollary to all that Humanism had stood for. Nevertheless, the great majority of the University leaders proved hostile to downright change, and continued, as of old, loyal to the tradition of Aristotle and to Scholasticism. Individual teachers were able to carry on the tradition of progress—the teaching of Greek was introduced and followed with zeal; yet the general trend was against the reforms that began to win their way in the west, and the University was already no longer in the leading position in Polish intellectual life when the national literature reached its splendid heights after 1550.

In the same way, on the question of religious reform, while the nation went very far in accepting the teachings of Luther and still more of Calvin, the University in Cracow refused to abate one jot of its loyalty to the Mother Church. It defended itself within its own circles by disowning younger men who were suspected of sympathies with reform. It thus earned the reputation for Conservatism which was to last for many generations.

Before the end of this great century, the indications of future decay began to multiply. True, the number of chairs in philosophy and law remained as before, or even increased; but the number of students was waning fast. The average in the first quarter was well over 300 per year—at times as high as 500; but as the temper of the nation advanced during the great struggle over religion, the attendance at Cracow went down to less than one half of what it was before. The loss was chiefly from one class, viz.: that of the upper strata of society. The sons of the gentry did not find in their own university the stirring forces of thought and discussion, of which they heard from abroad. Neither the matter taught, nor the method of teaching satisfied them. Profiting from the fact that times were good both in town and country, they spent part of their patrimony abroad, flocking in thousands to the



universities of western and southern Europe. So strong was this exodus that King Sigismund I passed a law in 1534, forbidding students to go abroad. On the other hand, he ruled that the status of knighthood should be given as a reward to students from the burgher class on the completion of twenty years of academic work.

The results of this were not what had been hoped for. Any catering for the sons of the poorer classes, at the expense of the well-to-do, meant the slow but sure impoverishment of the university itself. The income from fees became slight, and the chances less and less of attracting wealthy benefactors, who might in later life reward their *Alma Mater*. Add to this maladministration of endowments, and the result was an even further shrinkage of material support. The salaries of professors went lower and lower, and the teaching career was no longer able to attract men of brains and energy.

There were those who saw clearly the march of misfortune, and the problem of reform was more than once discussed in the meetings of the churchmen, with the Bishop of Cracow as Chairman—*ex-officio* Chancellor of the University. The results, alas, were minimal, and with the coming in 1565 of the Jesuit Fathers to Poland, a new complication arose. This body of highly trained and energetic men set itself throughout Europe virtually to establish a monopoly in the education of the sons of the upper classes and proceeded to establish its own schools of a special type, which were bound to conflict with all existing institutions. Very soon two rival academies were founded in Poland, and the competition which might under better conditions have been beneficial to education, actually only split up the already slender resources available, and brought disunion. During the first years of the 17th century there was still something of the life and movement which had marked earlier times, but then came a long period of twilight. The unending succession of invasions and wars which came over Poland after 1648 would in themselves have been enough to wreck the hopes of any advance in education. But there were other contributing factors. Long before this, class legislation on the part of the landed gentry had begun to rob the once flourishing cities of their privileges in economic and political life. This was ruinous to any school, and Cracow was no exception. If one adds the intellectual atmosphere nurtured by the Jesuit Fathers, who had established once for all in the *ratio studiorum* of 1599 a programme of studies which admitted of no change or improvement, one need

not wonder that the spirit of free inquiry and discussion simply ceased to exist.

A special misfortune for Cracow was the series of law suits with the Order in respect to the burgher schools to be found in many Polish cities, known up till now as "colonies of the Academy." The teachers in these schools were Cracow men, and the university felt that it had a sort of supreme position over the whole commonwealth. This monopoly was threatened by the Jesuits, and their energy in securing royal charters to found Middle Schools all over the country brought on a series of law suits, which not only cost money, but absorbed the attention and time of the university professors to the serious detriment of their scientific and other work. Litigation of this kind had its echoes both in the district assemblies and in the National Diet, and even echoed as far as the papal See, with unfortunate results for all concerned. Some of the published materials reveal bitter polemics, sinking at times to the level of insult. To make matters worse, there were troubles inside the university itself. Teachers were at loggerheads, and the spirit of lawlessness spread likewise to the students. Intolerance, not only of a religious kind, soon provoked brawls and even permanent feuds. What had been a rather fine tradition of student life among the "zaks" as they were called, degenerated into something that no one could be proud of.

Of course the forms of academic work went on, and even the founding of new Chairs is recorded from the first part of the 17th century, among them those of botany and anatomy. There was still alive some interest in history, and a comprehensive selection of manuscript materials bearing on the earlier years of the University was compiled at this time. At the middle of the century there were still fifty endowed professorships; but, and this was the *crux* of the whole matter, only one professor, the mathematician Broseius (Brożek), had any claim to a reputation as a scholar. The simple fact was that university life continued to slip down the path of decline, so that it shared with other parts of Europe all the splendid emptiness of what is called *baroque* in the arts and the sciences.

#### IV

Rebirth was long overdue, and it came—chiefly owing to the influence of French thinkers, at the middle of the 18th century. Two Cracow bishops set to work with energy to cleanse the Augean stables, and by 1765 beginnings had been made. The trend was, of course, in the direction of modern studies, notably of natural

science. But the real task was left to that institution of which all Poles have the right to be proud, the National Commission of Education, organised in 1773, and endowed with the properties possessed until recently by the Jesuit Fathers. In response to an appeal from the university a special commissioner was sent to Cracow, the eminent physiocrat and political thinker, Father Hugo Kołłątaj. He was given full powers to conduct a thorough investigation and prepare a project of reform. Being a wise man, he started with a study of the financial resources of the University. Having arrived at the truth in regard to these, and having tested with care the legal documents involved, he prepared a plan for the modernisation of studies on thorough-going lines.

Partly with the help of men of distinction brought in from abroad, but chiefly with the collaboration of the Heads of Departments, there was launched a new curriculum of studies—in the Faculty of Philosophy in 1778, and in the other faculties five years later. Such new subjects were introduced as economics, modern languages, political science, and the newer physics and chemistry. Most important was the clear line taken as to the method of study and teaching. Everything was to be based on experiment; only the scientific method was to be permitted in the various departments, including medicine. Botanical gardens already existed, (a private benefaction) and an astronomical observatory was now added. The old methods of learning by rote were discarded for a newer and better system. All lecturers were urged to graduate the treatment of the subject according to the difficulties of its content, and where possible to relate the theory of science to practical life. Finally, lectures were now delivered in the Polish tongue, the older Latin being carried on only in the field of theology. Among the new professors was Jan Sniadecki, later to make himself an international name as mathematician and physicist in the University of Wilno.

Thanks to these reforms, the University of Cracow was able to withstand the catastrophe of the Partitions, and the series of political changes to which the whole country was subjected in succeeding decades. Cracow had more than her share of vicissitudes, in that it had four different régimes in succession, before being finally incorporated in the Austrian Empire in 1846. As was to be expected, all this meant insecurity or even radical differences of policy toward the university and cultural life in general. During the first Austrian occupation, and again after 1846, a determined attempt was made at Germanisation. As part of the grandiose

schemes of Joseph II, the German language was introduced, and most of the chairs were occupied by Germans. It is proof of the intrinsic vitality of the institution that the few Polish professors who remained never left off struggling for their rights, and for the reintroduction of their mother tongue as the language of instruction.

This change, which meant a restoration of the ancient status, was finally brought about after 1861. As is known, the sixties were a time of crisis for the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, which ended at Sadowa in 1866. There followed the institution of provincial autonomy for the Polish provinces, which brought a certain measure of freedom of action. It is to the credit of the Poles that they were able at once to take advantage of the new conditions, and under the rectorship of the famous historian Joseph Szujski to rehabilitate the university as a teaching and research centre within a very few years, making it again the leading Polish university. The outstanding achievement of this time was the establishing of what came to be known as the Cracow School of Historians, who broke with the prevailing tradition and set about a completely fresh investigation of the past of the nation. In ruthless fashion they discarded the idealism of Poland's past that was characteristic of the period of Romance, and even went so far as to say that the fault of the Partitions was that of the Poles themselves, and not of their predatory neighbours. This act alone sufficed to rouse the somewhat apathetic minds of Polish writers and thinkers everywhere, and made possible an exchange of views—based on an entirely new examination of the evidence, which has established Polish historical writing on a very sound basis.

With the Polish language taught in all the classrooms, and with the spirit of free inquiry prevailing, there was now a double appeal to the youth of the nation. The reading and study of the national literature took on new and unheard of dimensions, and the presence of a distinguished critic like Stanislaw Tarnowski prepared the ground for the younger generation which followed at the turn of the century. Almost more important was the splendid development in the field of the exact sciences. New buildings were erected, to house modern laboratories; and hospitals with up-to-date clinics lined the Copernicus Street, on the other side of the Old Town from the university proper. In a generation the number of professorial chairs doubled, so that with the coming of the new century it was over one hundred.

The harsher régime prevailing both in the Prussian provinces, where no institutions of learning were permitted to the Poles at all,

and in Congress Poland, where the Russians had closed the short-lived Polish university of Warsaw (*Szkoła Główna*) in 1869, gave national significance to this revival of great traditions in Cracow. It was here that Poles foregathered in 1879 to celebrate the Jubilee of the eminent novelist, J. J. Krasiński. It was here that the Literary Congress met on the 300th anniversary of the death of Jan Kochanowski in 1884. A decade later, on an even more moving occasion, the whole nation gathered around Wawel Hill to honour the remains of one greater than Kochanowski—the national poet Adam Mickiewicz, whose remains were brought home from Paris for final interment. Finally, it was under the aegis of the University that there was founded in 1872 the Academy of Sciences, in whose long record of service the professors were bound to play the major part. Small wonder then that not only Poles, but all true disciples of learning as well, were glad of the invitations that came in 1900 to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the founding of the Jagiellonian School. How different the place, how different the institution from the one Copernicus had known! The “colleges” were long since gone, the pattern of continental universities with their division into Faculties having come into the forefront of the picture. Various types of student organisations remained—cultural, economic, political, and there was the same care-free outlook on life as has characterised students in every age. But with this difference: here and there could be seen older faces, and among these the “iron students”: people who had long since completed their studies (some of them may have failed to do this), but who lingered on among their younger colleagues, engaged in recruiting them for conspiratorial service for the nation. By 1900, moreover, women had won equal status in higher studies with men, and so the whole appearance of things changed. Cracow had achieved modernisation.

Those were the days of “Young Poland.” The realism of the Cracow School of Historians and their contemporaries was no longer acceptable. Youth nurtured by the great tales of Sienkiewicz and the master-canvases of Matejko would not agree to the view that all the sufferings Poland had experienced in the 19th century had come on her for her sins—and that nothing was to be done about it. True, it was the artists of the School of Fine Arts who led the way in the “revolt,” and with them those who produced the journal *Życie* (Life); but more than one was an *alumnus* of Cracow, and more than one university professor shared in the work. The triumphs of Wyspiański’s dramas from 1900 to 1904 sealed the

matter, and when Ignacy Chrzanowski came from Warsaw to succeed Tarnowski in the chair of Polish Literature in 1910, the battle was won. Without in any way detracting from the fine contribution made to the national cause in the last decades before the World War by the neighbouring University of Lwow, one can speak of Cracow as the hearth and home of most of the forces that were soon to find expression in a liberated Poland.

## V

The Act of Foundation of King Casimir announced that the new school was to be "a pearl of sound knowledge," intended to produce "men adorned with fine virtue, and proficient in the various fields of learning." It cannot be denied that, though betimes the light shone dimly, the university has fulfilled the intentions of those who made it. Across the ages marches a host of illustrious sons—clergy, civil servants, lawyers, physicians, and teachers; not to mention those of independent means, whose part it was to be decorative rather than useful. And one fact should not be overlooked: Cracow has kept pace with the best of thought and action of Western Europe, whether in the later years of Scholasticism, or in the fine flower of Humanism, or in the secularising tendencies of the Enlightenment, or in the pursuit of knowledge by the scientific method in our own day. As long as Latin was the *lingua universalis*, the teachers spoke and wrote it; but when the national State arose, national schools followed, and, though tardily, because of the loyal Catholicism of the universities, Cracow became, in fact, what she always was in spirit. What had always been implicit, now became explicit. As suggested in the first part of this paper, the influence of the spoken word from the professorial chair remains a precious memory in the minds of the rising generation, and contributes essentially to the social structure.

This was seen when Poland once more became free in 1918. The sons and daughters of the Jagiellonian University were to be found in every corner of the commonwealth, engaged in every kind of service. What is known in Central Europe as the intelligentsia was the one hope of the new state. The dynamic lay, perhaps, in the masses; but the striking force that gave expression to everything were the men and women who had known schooling. So we find Cracow men and women being taken to man the machinery of administration to help organise (or reorganise) the universities of Warsaw, Poznan, Wilno and Lublin, to create the framework of Middle Schools and Training Colleges where they had never existed,



to establish medical and public health services where such things had never been heard of, and to assist in the diplomatic service abroad. A special feature of the last-named were the cultural embassy activities undertaken by men like Roman Dyboski (the English speaking world), Zdzisław Jachimecki (Italy), and Jan Dąbrowski (Hungary), all Cracow teachers.

As outstanding examples of particular work done by members of the University of Cracow in the years succeeding the World War one should mention the following: the battle with typhus and other epidemics, in which help was given by Britain and the U.S.A.; the founding and development of experimental stations for the study and control of livestock diseases; the huge task of co-ordinating the existing legal codes, and creating out of them a single system of justice; the representation on the Hague Tribunal; the writing and publishing of the ocean of text-books required in the Polish language for the thousands of new Middle Schools and other advanced institutions; and the manning of certain of the national Research Laboratories, which began to arise on modest lines, to meet the public need. To put the matter briefly, everything needed doing, and there were never enough hands for the task. Cracow men who had been abroad for years now came home to take up important work.

Small wonder if the university gave the new republic a host of civil servants—including provincial governors, several cabinet ministers, and at least one premier. It should be added that many professors were urged to accept public office from time to time, but refused the honour. In general, the university has tried to keep clear of party politics.

The reproach has often enough been made, and not only as a jest: *Kraków spi!*—Cracow is asleep! This charge had only to be studied in order to find its own refutation. More recently it has received a body-blow from the invaders of Poland. The world has heard how the whole corpus of university teachers was arrested and deported, for the sole reason that the university was “a nest of Polish patriotism.” In other words, the professors and their assistants were a thorn in the side of all enemies. *Sic semper!* Nevertheless, in spite of the Nazis, the Vistula continues to flow beneath the Wawel Hill, and that ancient fortress, the Westminster of Poland, looks down over a no less ancient city; in the centre of which is set the university, just as its spirit is enshrined in the hearts of its people.

N. N.

*London, February 1940.*